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By Henry J. Taylor

Economy Not the CIA's Business

In a characteristic leap out of its proper role, the Central Intelligence Agency recently called an unprecedented press conference to spout off its guesses regarding what's what in the Soviet economy.

Wouldn't you think this muddled crowd was already in enough hot water without making new noises on its own?

Like the incredible overkill nuclear materials stockpiling program, our spy shop has gone completely off its rocker. It's a sick elephant. And a sick elephant is a formidable danger.

On General George Washington's first morning in New York after the war he had breakfast with a certain obscure man named Hercules Mulligan, a Manhattan tailor, in honor of Mulligan's service as a spy.

It is an ancient and needed operation—now more than ever. And many, many unnamed, unnamed and largely unrewarded heroes risk their lives working in the CIA abroad.

Intelligence comes to us from others who are called "unvented sources"—men who remain as mysterious to us as their employer as they do to the enemy against whom they work.

But the entire Washington top of this out-of-hand agency needs a vast overhaul and housecleaning.

Spy shop? Next to the Pentagon, the world's largest office building, the new CIA emporium (\$45 million) is the largest building in Washington. Even so, its armchair legions doing whatnot spill over and still fill the four buildings used formerly.

The "shop" now has at least 10,000 employees, substantially more than the State Department, plunging into a madcap polka to the beat of their bureaucratic hearts. For it's the same old story: If you have more bureaucratic hands than necessary they'll always dream up something to do.

The competence of our espionage is being traduced by the pygmies of the bureaucratic world. Simultaneously, the sick elephant wallows off into policy areas as at least charged against it in South Viet Nam, Cambodia, Turkey and elsewhere.

Gen. William J. Donovan's Office of Strategic Services, our global spy net, spent about



\$135 million on espionage throughout all four years in World War II.

The CIA is now spending an estimated \$750 million each year, a sum that makes total State Department funds look like peanuts.

Yet most of our global intelligence is gathered overtly by military, naval, Air Force, State Department and other representatives not on the CIA payroll at all.

Nobody suggests the CIA should operate in a fish bowl. Nobody should know what they do with their spy money.

But not just a part of the CIA funds are secret. Instead, all of its spendings are secret. And this abuse of secrecy is exactly what helped bring about the outrageous situation in which the incredible overkill nuclear materials stockpiling program got completely off its rocker, as detailed in this column in a series last summer.

Blessings be, President Johnson has moved to cut that senseless production.

He's starting with a 25 percent slash in the pork-barrel monstrosity. And there's every indication that now that he has tackled this unconscionable mess he won't let go of the neglected problem. A 50 percent cut would still leave more nuclear "gunpowder" than would exterminate all enemy targets—in fact, all cities of 200,000 or more people in the entire world, 500 times. LBJ has a similar opportunity with the CIA.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and other knowing legislators, and at least five investigating committees (what happened to the Cuba investigation?) have complained and gotten no place.

Just more Presidential boards of consultants, with the CIA now so loaded to the ears with self-assurance that it calls a press conference regarding Soviet guesses when its function is to supply the White House and State Department with its product and let such officials speak to the world, if at all.

President Truman wisely created this agency (1947), directly responsible to the President.

But he recently wrote his deep anxieties about the sick elephant. The carefully contrived piracy in the CIA must be punctured, and if President Johnson will use the same good judgment about this that he has about the overkill stockpiling we're in for far better days against our enemies everywhere.